

REMEMBERING CONGRESSMAN JIM JONTZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about a friend of mine who passed away on Saturday. His name was Jim Jontz. For 6 years, from 1987 to 1993, Jim represented Indiana's fifth congressional district in the House of Representatives. That is where I first met him and worked with him.

In 1991, the *Almanac of American Politics* described him as:

One of the most incredibly hardworking and gifted natural politicians who has routinely done the impossible.

Two years ago Jim was diagnosed with colon cancer that had already spread to his liver. We hoped at the time he would find a way to "do the impossible" again and defeat this illness. He fought that cancer for 2 valiant years, but he died on Saturday afternoon in his home in Portland, OR.

Jim Jontz defied ordinary stereotypes. He was a progressive Democrat elected three times by one of the most conservative areas in the country to represent them in Congress. People used to wonder all the time how that was possible. I have some ideas. For one thing, Jim had a flair for trademarks. He was famous for riding his sister's rusty blue Schwinn with mismatched tires in parades.

Jim also practiced a very personal style of politics—something he learned from his days as a grassroots organizer. He ran what he called "shoe leather" campaigns. His goal in every campaign was to knock on as many doors and speak to as many people as possible. He owned four pairs of shoes that he rotated in and out of at a local repair shop every week. That is how much shoe leather he put into his job. His campaign signs were always shaped like shoes.

Most importantly, Jim Jontz was a bridge builder. There is a school of politics that says the way you win campaigns is to divide people up into groups and pit them against one another. Jim was a master of a different and better kind of politics. He wanted to build bridges and understanding between groups that too often saw themselves as enemies: organized labor and environmentalists, and family farmers and environmentalists. He was always trying to find some common ground. He cared deeply about preserving the land and family farms and he believed the best way to preserve family farms was to help farmers be better stewards of the land. That seemed like a strange idea to some people 25 years ago. Today, it surely makes sense.

Because of his bridge-building abilities, Jim was tapped to mediate disputes between farmers and environmentalists during negotiations for the 1990 farm bill. One result was a wetlands protection program that won strong support from farmers, environmentalists, and sportsmen. That program has saved many family farms, preserved the natural beauty of our

land, and protected our clean water. It is part of the great legacy Jim Jontz leaves.

In addition to his important work on the House Agriculture Committee, Jim served on the Education and Labor Committee, the House Select Committee on Aging, and on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. On Veterans' Affairs, he worked with another brave man—my closest friend when I came to Congress and for so many years—Lane Evans. They worked to help veterans living with one of the most common but least understood injuries of war: post-traumatic stress disorder. Those efforts are part of Jim's legacy that we are relying on today while so many of our soldiers come back from Iraq and Afghanistan trying to conquer the demons in their minds from that experience.

As everyone who knew Jim also knew, he was deeply committed to preserving the ancient forests in the Pacific Northwest. That commitment earned him the support of celebrities and common folk as well who shared his love for America's natural treasures. It also won him the enmity of powerful logging interests and their supporters in Congress.

During the debate of the 1990 farm bill, Jim offered an amendment that would have prevented logging of ancient forests and national parks. A powerful House member of the other party retaliated by drafting legislation that would have allowed the Federal Government to create a 1-million acre national forest smack dab in the middle of Jim's congressional district.

In the end, Jim's efforts to save old-growth forests probably ended his career in Congress. The timber industry targeted him for defeat when he ran for his fourth House term in 1992 and he lost, but he didn't stop. In 1994, he ran for the Senate, losing in his last campaign. In 1995, he moved to Portland, OR, where he continued to work to save ancient forests and preserve the Endangered Species Act.

In 1998, Jim was elected president of Americans for Democratic Action, a position he held for 4 years before becoming ADA president emeritus. His most recent project for the ADA was leading its "Working Families Win" campaign which focused on raising the minimum wage, providing working families with affordable health care, and other issues of basic economic justice.

Jim Jontz grew up in Indianapolis and graduated phi beta kappa from Indiana University in 1973 after less than 3 years with a degree in geology. He fell into politics by accident almost in 1974. He opposed a dam building project that he thought threatened his little community. He challenged the chief sponsor of the project, who happened to be the majority leader of the Indiana House, and Jim won. At age 22 he became a political giant killer. He also served in the Indiana Senate before being elected to Congress in 1996 at age 35.

Jim won that first race against the House majority leader by two votes. He believed he picked up those last two votes when he insisted on campaigning at 10 p.m. the night before the election at a laundromat that was still open. That was Jim Jontz—using every last minute to try to make a difference. It was the way he ran his campaigns, it is the way he lived his life, and he did make a difference.

I join so many others—not just from Indiana and from Congress, but from across the country—in offering condolences to Jim's family: his mother, stepfather, and his sister who lives in Chicago. He was a good man who left a great legacy. I am proud to have called him my friend. He will be missed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

IRAQ WAR

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as I come to the floor this morning to share my concerns about this country's disastrous policies in Iraq, our Nation is mourning the unimaginable loss of 32 people in the tragic and senseless shootings at Virginia Tech. The thoughts and prayers of every American are with the victims of this horrific episode, the deadliest shooting this country has ever seen. We are only beginning to learn exactly what happened yesterday. We may never know why it happened, but what we know for certain is that in our shared grief we will find shared resolve to care for the wounded, to comfort the families and friends of those who died, to support this university and its community, and to search for answers and hope this tragedy may never be repeated.

I have been a member of the Senate now for just over 100 days. I am here, and many of my freshman colleagues are here, because the people of Rhode Island, like millions of other people across this country, looked at the war in Iraq and saw something that needed to change. They saw hundreds of billions of dollars spent, much of it wasted on reconstruction contracts that were sloppily managed or ill-advised. They saw one after another in a succession of retired generals protesting the failed strategy in Iraq and arguing for a different course. They saw reports that the Bush administration had misused and politicized our national intelligence services to press a case for war that did not exist. They read books, chronicling a heartbreaking series of mistakes and misjudgments. They saw tens of thousands of American soldiers return home grievously injured, and mourned more than 3,000 men and women who will never return home.

The country saw one of the greatest foreign policy disasters of American history and demanded a new direction. The American people voted for change. They were sincere, sober, and correct in their judgment, and this new Congress listened, but President Bush did